

Message Text

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41

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DRC-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-11

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03

NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 CU-05

A-01 PER-05 MMS-04 OMB-01 TRSE-00 OPR-02 HEW-08 EUR-25

NIC-01 /181 W

----- 025210

R 261041Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 959

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

UNCLAS VIENTIANE 7461

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, LA

SUBJECT: LABOR SITUATION

REF: VIENTIANE 7329

SUMMARY: LAO FEDERATION OF LABOR HAS ISSUED DECLARATION ON NOW-SETTLED OPERATION BROTHERHOOD STRIKE AND VIENTIANE POST HAS COMMENTED CRITICALLY ON US MISSION EMPLOYMENT OF THAI NATIONALS. MEANWHILE, ROYAL AIR LAO EMPLOYEES HAVE REPORTEDLY BEGUN TO AGITATE AGAINST THEIR AMERICAN AND FILIPINO SUPERVISORS.
END SUMMARY

1. THE NEWSPAPER VIENTIANE POST IN ITS SEPTEMBER 24 EDITION CARRIED A DECLARATION ISSUED SIX DAYS EARLIER BY THE LAO FEDERATION OF LABOR (LFL) ON THE NOW-SETTLED OPERATION BROTHERHOOD (B) HOSPITAL STRIKE. IN INTRODUCING THE DECLARATION, THE POST CHARACTERIZED PURPOSE OF STRIKE AS "TO DRIVE THE FOREIGN DOCTORS OUT OF LAOS."

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2. THE LFL DECLARATION ITSELF PLACES THE BLAME FOR PRESENT SOCIAL UNREST IN LAOS ON "THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF THE COLONIAL POWERS" DURING THE LAST 100 YEARS. IT SAYS RECENT DISORDERS ARE NOT THE RESULT OF STRIKES BUT RATHER HAVE BEEN PROVOKED BY "NEO-COLONIALISTS DARK POWERS IN THE COUNTRY, DISHONEST BUSINESSMEN AND FOREIGN CAPITALISTS."

3. LFL DECLARATION BACKS ALL DEMANDS MADE BY STRIKING OB EMPLOYEES. WITH SPECIFIC REGARD TO THEIR REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN WAGES, DECLARATION SAYS: "USAID SHOULD TAKE CARE OF IT. EVER SINCE OB WAS CREATED, THE MONEY FOR ITS EXPENSES HAS COME FROM THAT ORGANIZATION. THE STRIKERS THEREFORE HAVE ASKED NOTHING OF THE GOVERNMENT."

4. AFTER ALL THE POSTURING JUST DESCRIBED, HOWEVER, THE DECLARATION ENDS ON A MORE MODERATE NOTE. IT CALLS FOR THE PROTESTORS AND THE GOVERNMENT TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES PEACEFULLY AND TO AVOID TROUBLE. DECLARATION CONCLUDES BY NOTING THAT PRESENT ECONOMIC CRISIS IN LAOS CAN BE RESOLVED ONLY THROUGH "A REDUCTION IN THE PRICES OF MERCHANDISE AND (THROUGH) SELF-SUFFICIENCY, WHICH CAN BE ATTAINED ONLY BY INCREASING DOMESTIC PRODUCTION." (COMMENT: THIS ECHOES THE LPF POSITION ON THE SOLUTION OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS.)

5. A COLUMN IN THE SAME ISSUE OF THE POST CRITICIZES THE EMBASSY, USAID AND USIS FOR EMPLOYING LARGE NUMBERS OF THAI NATIONALS. THE COLUMN ALLEGES THAT THE AMERICAN MISSION IS NOT MAKING AN EFFORT TO REPLACE ITS FOREIGN EMPLOYEES WITH LAO.

6. ON SEPTEMBER 24 AND 25 THE SAME PAPER ALSO CARRIED ARTICLES DESCRIBING A MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LAO EMPLOYEES OF ROYAL AIR LAO (RAL) WHICH TOOK PLACE ON SEPTEMBER 23.. ACCORDING TO THE POST THE MEETING, PRESIDED OVER BY BOUNLEUANG VONGSOUTH, DECIDED TO ASK TIAO PANYA SOUVANNA PHOUMA TO FIRE THE TWENTY-FIVE AMERICANS AND FILIPINOS WORKING AT RAL -- ACCORDING TO BOUNLEUANG, IN ORDER TO ECONOMIZE ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND BECAUSE THE LAO EMPLOYEES ARE CAPABLE OF REPLACING THEM. LAO EMPLOYEES SINGLED OUT FOR CRITICISM FOUR AMERICANS FOR THEIR "VIOLENT" CONDUCT AND PARTICULARLY ASKED THAT THEY BE REPLACED. THE ASSOCIATION'S DEMAND WILL BE SUBMITTED TO TIAO PANYA UPON HIS RETURN

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FROM TRIP ABROAD. MEMBERS WARN THAT IF THEY DO NOT RECEIVE SATISFACTION THE ASSOCIATION WILL TAKE "JUST AND SUITABLE" MEASURES.

WHITEHOUSE

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